

Thompson, Staff Sergeant George T. Alexander, Jr., Lance Corporal Jonathan R. Spears, Corporal Benjamin D. Hoeffner, Specialist Christopher T. Monroe, Sergeant Michael T. Robertson, Sergeant 1st Class Ramon A. Acevedoaponte, Staff Sergeant Lewis J. Gentry, Sergeant Evan S. Parker, Master Sergeant Thomas A. Wallsmith, Sergeant James Witkowski, Lance Corporal Robert F. Eckfield, Jr., Lance Corporal Jared J. Kremm, Staff Sergeant Daniel R. Lightner, Jr., Captain Michael J. Mackinnon, Colonel William W. Wood, 1st Lieutenant Debra A. Banaszak, Private 1st Class Dillon M. Jutras, Sergeant Shaker T. Guy, Captain Raymond D. Hill II, Staff Sergeant Travis W. Nixon, Private 1st Class Kenny D. Rojas, Staff Sergeant Joel P. Dameron, Sergeant Michael Paul Hodshire, Specialist William J. Byler, Specialist Derence W. Jack, Private Adam R. "A.J." Johnson, Sergeant 1st Class Matthew R. Kading, Staff Sergeant Wilgene T. Lieto.

Mr. Speaker, Veterans Day is Friday. Let us remember each of these fallen heroes and all who came before them. In the words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt: "Each of these heroes stands in the unbroken line of patriots who have dared to die that freedom might live and grow and increase in its blessings."

Let us also remember the brave men and women who continue to serve our Nation with distinction in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world. Our thoughts and prayers and gratitude are with you and your families at this time until you return home safely to your fellow man and woman, citizens of this country.

This Friday we will remember the 2,058 military personnel who have fallen in Iraq and the 247 Americans who have fallen in Afghanistan.

□ 1900

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HEARINGS TO ADDRESS WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I might speak at this time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I came to the floor last week and read part of an article that appeared on October 23 in the article by

Knight Ridder reporters about the Pentagon program costing taxpayers millions in inflated prices. I came to the floor and I reported that there was some reports that we were paying anywhere from \$20 for a plastic ice tray that should cost about 89 cents. In addition to that, we were paying \$81 for coffee makers that you can buy at a retail store for \$29. In addition, I said that we were paying for a 5-cubic-foot refrigerator \$27,000 that should cost about \$3,000 or \$4,000, and these are the kinds of refrigerators that are put on aircraft.

I wanted to report to the House tonight that I am extremely pleased. I wrote a letter to the chairman and ranking member, Chairman DUNCAN HUNTER and Ranking Member IKE SKELTON, and today we held hearings on this issue of inflated prices. I want to say that the hearing was attended by a fair number of those on the Armed Services Committee.

The witnesses, the Admiral and the Under Secretary that were there present, we were able to ask about these inflated prices. They explained this program that is called the Prime Vendor program. We talked about how it used to be when there were competitive prices, and now we have gone to where there is a middleman that works with the prime vendors.

From that, Mr. Speaker, the reason I wanted to come to the floor tonight is because I was so encouraged by the response of the chairman and the ranking member that next week we are going to bring the prime vendors to the committee to talk about these inflated prices.

Mr. Speaker, as I said today on the Armed Services Committee, there is one thing that the American people, maybe they do not follow us when we talk about deficits and debt and some of these other issues that are very important to the future of this Nation; but there is one thing they know, that if you are paying \$20 for a plastic ice cube tray that you can buy for 89 cents, they know that is not right. I also said to those on the panel today that when you are paying \$24,000 or \$25,000 for a 5-cubic-foot refrigerator, the taxpayers know that is not a wise investment as well.

So tonight I want to give credit to the chairman and the ranking member of the Armed Services Committee. It was a very informative hearing today that will lead to additional hearings next week. And what I am hoping will come from this is that the taxpayers will know that we do care about abuses and we do care about inflated prices.

We are going to get to the bottom of this, thanks to the leadership of Chairman HUNTER and Ranking Member SKELTON and the committee members, both Republican and Democrat. We are going to get to the bottom of this and we are going to be able to say to the taxpayers and to the reporters for Knight Ridder that wrote this article that we are going to see that wrongs

are made right and we are going to do exactly what is in the best interests of the taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, before I close, I know that my friend from Texas and my friend from Illinois talked about those who serve in this Nation and who have given their lives. As I close this way all over my district, I will close this way tonight.

I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform, to please bless their families. I ask God to please hold in his loving arms the families who have given a child, dying for freedom.

IRAQ AND THE 250TH MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BATTALION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, usually, when I speak on the House floor each evening, I voice my concern about some of the Bush administration's woe-ful policies in Iraq. Trust me, there is no shortage of material to speak about.

But tonight I want to boast a little bit. I want to share how very proud I am to represent the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion, an Army unit that returned home from Iraq today. They returned home to Marin County, just north of the Golden Gate Bridge in California's Sixth Congressional District.

I had the great pleasure to meet and enjoy dinner with the members of the 250th battalion this past September during my visit to Iraq. Their vigilance and dedication to the welfare of the United States is admirable. Everything they do, they do to serve their country. And I could not be more proud to represent them as their voice in Congress. They are truly American heroes.

Unfortunately, the members of the 250th Military Intelligence Battalion and other military units that have served or are currently serving in Iraq have not always gotten the treatment they deserve from their government. Far too often, the Bush administration has failed to live up to its promise to the troops, whether it is denying them full veterans' benefits, sending them on second, third, and now fourth deployments to Iraq and/or to Afghanistan, or failing to provide them with the life-saving body armor or equipment that they need. One thing is clear: This administration has failed our troops time and again.

Sadly, the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who have been deployed to Iraq, and their families, were not the only ones affected by the war in Iraq. That is because just about every single American will suffer from the billions of dollars in budget cuts to important domestic programs since the U.S. invaded Iraq. These budget cuts are directly related to not only the tax cuts for the wealthiest among us, but also to the ludicrous spending for the military misadventures around the world